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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Monday, January 30, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WATER SYSTEMS FOR FARM HOMES." Information from Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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You have heard recently of the lack of running water indoors in a large number of our farm homes the country over. In many areas 50 percent or more of the rural homes are without the simple convenience that the city woman takes for granted. But when income is increased the majority of farm families consider putting in a water system ahead of any other improvement. Today I want to tell you what is being done about this in various States.

Because of the high cost of a complete water system and plumbing installation, on many farms the improvement is made in installments, each step bringing the family nearer to its goal. For example, the Arkansas home management specialist says that the usual order is to begin with the sink with a drain as the first unit, then install a hand pump, hydraulic ram or eaves troughs. The last two are used as a means of getting water into the storage tank. The storage tank is usually mounted on a tower and delivers water by gravity. Some families get no farther than this point for several years.

The bath-room may be realized by building on an extra room enclosing one end of the back porch or a hall. In some demonstrations the toilet and septic tank are installed before the hot water system is put in. One Arkansas woman dammed up a spring on her farm and installed a hydraulic ram. This pumps water into a 600 gallon elevated supply tank located near the house. The total expense for labor, pipe, tank and ram was $75.

Another family placed an elevated tank on a tower outside the kitchen wall so that it could be filled with rain water from the gutters along the house roof. Pipe, faucets, gutters, fittings, tank, tower and labor cost only $36. Bathing facilities on one farm were provided by building a bathhouse adjoining the pump house. Water is piped from the pump and the bathhouse is heated by a stove. Formerly all bathing had to be done in the kitchen.

Up in Maine some families are enjoying the comforts of a washroom even if water has not been piped into the house. The idea is that the washroom is one step along the way to a complete bathroom as soon as finances permit. Many farm homes have an unused room that could be fixed for this purpose. In the Maine project bathtubs with drains are installed so that water can be drawn out even though it has to be poured in from a bucket.

"Safe and convenient water" constituted one of the major projects in Illinois home demonstration work in 1937. It was supplemented by the suggestion that a flock of 200 hens properly managed and cared for would, in one year's time, come close to paying for the complete installation of a sink, running water, and bathroom in the farm home.

An Iowa farmer, B.H. Dammerman, consented to cooperate in a modernizing demonstration in which the first step was to be a satisfactory water system. This family already had electricity, and a soft-water cistern, with a pitcher spout pump at the sink. The demonstration consisted of installing an electric-pressure system connected to the soft-water cistern; a range boiler for heating water with a coil in the furnace, together with a kerosene water heater coil, and the necessary piping to bring both hot and cold water to the kitchen sink. Pipes extended into the basement bring hot and cold soft water to the laundry. Modernizing the bathroom will be the next step.

Farm women in one Mississippi County set themselves a goal of 50 sinks installed, in 1937, but in one month's time, 127 sinks were reported to the home management specialist. The husband of one South Carolina club member made a sink from an old automobile tank. He said, "It didn't cost more than 35 cents, for soldering the pipe, but I wouldn't take five dollars for it for the amount of waste-water-toting it has saved me in just one month." Needless to say, it has saved his wife many more steps and "totings" than it has him.

The problem in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, was to get satisfactory well drillers at a reasonable price. Arrangements were made to pay in farm products, or else four or five farmers clubbed together to get the work done.

A 4-H club group from Wayne County, North Carolina, gave a play during Farm and Home week at the State Agricultural College to demonstrate a simple hand operated home water system which could be put in without much expense. One family that became inspired to undertake it said, "We don't see why in the world we waited so long, when the small amount invested results in such convenience and comfort to the family."

The agricultural engineering specialist in Tennessee arranged for a truck to tour the rural districts of the state, showing several types of water systems, including a pitcher pump, hand force pump, hydraulic ram, gas-engine-operated pump, and two types of automatic electric pumps. As a result over 2800 water systems were installed.

The fact that electricity has become available in some of the rural areas has influenced the installation of water systems. The moral of this tale, however, seems to be that even without the help of electricity, farm women in many states are being released from the heavy drudgery of carrying water in buckets for household cleaning, laundering, and bathing. What so many have accomplished may serve as an inspiration to others.

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